



Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of Governor Bob McDonnell

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Governor McDonnell Signs Military and Veterans Legislation

~Measures Make it Easier for Veterans and Military Spouses to Gain In-State Tuition; Speed up Access to Disability Benefits~

Continues Governor's Effort to Make Virginia "America's Most Veteran-Friendly State."

RICHMOND – Governor Bob McDonnell was joined today at Fort Lee by a host of military service and family members, veterans and elected officials to sign into law 25 bills aimed at assisting active-duty military members, veterans and their families. The new laws are part of the Governor's ongoing effort to make Virginia "America's Most Veteran-Friendly State" and were passed by the General Assembly during the 2011 session. The measures are aimed at assisting veterans with balancing their service to the nation with their family and civilian commitments. The bills also make it easier for military families to transition into civilian life after concluding their military service.

The bills signed today include laws to:

- Waive the one-year residency requirement for veterans needed to qualify for in-state tuition

- Clarify that a Virginia-domiciled military spouse does not forfeit domicile status for in-state tuition due when he or she accompanies the active-duty service member stationed outside of Virginia
- Extend the expiration date of certain licenses or registrations held by the spouse of a service member when stationed overseas
- Allow the Department of Human Resource Management to offer voluntary TRICARE supplement health coverage for state employees who are veterans of the armed forces
- Provide to a veteran one copy of vital record free of charge if that record is to be used to determine the eligibility for state or federal veteran benefits
- Provide an exemption to the Certificate of Public Need (COPN) process to all current and future veterans care centers

Speaking about the legislation signed today, Governor McDonnell remarked, “With the passage of this legislation, Virginia has moved even closer to becoming ‘America’s Most Veteran-Friendly State,’ a goal we set out during the 2009 campaign. The Commonwealth is home to 327,000 active-duty military members and family members, the second-largest active-duty military population in the nation. In addition, over 823,000 veterans call Virginia home, the 7th greatest number in the country and by 2016 it is projected that Virginia will be home to the fourth-greatest amount of veterans nationally. In short, military members and veterans are an integral part of the fabric of life in Virginia. We must continue to work to better serve these brave Virginians who have kept our great nation safe and make it easier on them and their families to balance military and civilian life. They have served us, and we must serve them. I am pleased that the General Assembly passed these important pieces of legislation with broad bipartisan support. The courageous Virginians who volunteer to keep us free and secure should be recognized for the sacrifices they, and their families, make on a daily basis in that effort. A grateful Commonwealth thanks them all for their service.”

Senator Ralph Northam (D-Norfolk) commented, “As we continue to work toward making Virginia the most veteran-friendly state in America, we must focus on streamlining services for our veterans. SB959 provides veterans a free copy of their vital records to be used to determine eligibility for state or federal veteran’s benefits. This will greatly speed up the review process, helping our veterans get their disability benefits sooner.”

Delegate Kirk Cox (R-Colonial Heights) added, “With the passage of HB1761, veterans who are employed by the state will now be able to enroll in TRICARE supplement health coverage. State employees who elect to enroll in TRICARE will benefit from the convenience and savings of payroll deduction for TRICARE supplemental coverage on a pre-tax basis. This is advantageous to the state and to our veterans by providing better access to active duty and veterans services.”

Delegate Rich Anderson (R-Woodbridge) noted, “Veterans are highly skilled, trained and motivated, and are the types of citizens we want to choose to make Virginia home. The General Assembly has taken steps over the last couple years to allow in-state tuition for active duty military members, their spouses, and their children, as well as retired service members who live in Virginia at the time of their retirement. HB1861 will waive the one-year residency requirement for veterans who wish to establish Virginia as their permanent residency. This

legislation will better enable our veterans to get a good college education and join our workforce following their service.”

Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli added, “I am pleased with the progress that we have made on behalf of our veterans in the 2011 General Assembly. One of my main campaign platforms was improving the veteran-friendliness of the Office of the Attorney General, and 2011 has been a good legislative year for those who have served in the defense of our Commonwealth and country. I look forward to working with the governor’s office and the Virginia Department of Veteran Services to make 2012 even better.”

In 2010, the governor and General Assembly advanced many efforts to make Virginia more veteran-friendly, including appointing a senior advisor for military community and dependent affairs, passing real estate tax relief for disabled veterans, continuing the Wall of Honor, waiving administration fees for permits and applications for qualified veteran small business start-ups, and providing college admission assistance and improvements for veterans. To read more about the 2010 legislation please visit:

<http://www.governor.virginia.gov/News/viewRelease.cfm?id=154>

The governor is a United States Army veteran. He served 21 years active duty and reserve, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1997. His late father was a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force. The Governor’s oldest daughter, Jeanine, served in the United States Army, including a one-year tour of duty in Iraq. The governor’s late father-in-law served in the United States Marines during World War II, surviving the battles of Saipan, Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

“America’s Most Veteran Friendly State”: 2011 Veterans Legislation

- *SB 0959 (Northam)/HB 1719 (Massie)* – Provides to a veteran or his/her spouse, free of charge, one copy of vital record, if that record is to be used in the determination of eligibility for state or federal veterans benefits
- *SB892 (Wampler)/HB 1761 (Cox, K.)* – Permits the Virginia Department of Human Resource Management to offer voluntary TRICARE supplement health coverage under the Commonwealth’s IRC Section 125 cafeteria plan
- *SB1361 (Stosch)/HB 1862 (Cosgrove)* – Extends the expiration of certain licenses, certifications, registrations or other documents held by the spouse of a service member when stationed overseas
- *SB824 (Edwards)/HB1861 (Anderson)* – Increases educational opportunity for veterans by waiving the one-year residency requirement needed to qualify for in-state tuition rates
- *SB 986 (Locke)/HB1697 (Athey)* – Exempts Department of Veterans Services facilities from certificate of public need requirements
- *SB 958 (Miller, JC)/HB1666 (Cole & Watts)* – Removes the requirement for the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services to establish a *Department of Veterans Services Advisory Committee*

- *SB 1296 (Ruff)/HB 2041 (Anderson)* – Allows any commission created by executive order to study and make recommendations concerning the prevention of closure and realignment of federal security installations in Virginia to withhold from public disclosure certain records relating to the relocation of national security facilities
- *HB 1976 (Greason)* – Adds a citizen member to the Virginia Council on the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children
- *HB1557 (Cox, K)/SB1399 (Locke)* – Maintains a ratio of one staff person at the Department of Veterans Services for every 26,212 veterans residing in the Commonwealth
- *SB910 (Herring)* – Allows deployed military parents to delegate their visitation rights with children to a member of their family while they are stationed overseas
- *HB1858 (Anderson)/SB886 (Martin/Vogel)* – Changes the duration of a temporary voter registration due to military service
- *HB2415 (Armstrong)* – Establishes a special discounted hunting license for resident and nonresident veterans who have a service-connected disability
- *HB1535 (Merricks)* – Allows the Board of Medicine or Board of Nursing to consider military training and experience for certain licensures
- *HB2279 (Keam)* – Requires the Commissioner of Health to consider relevant military experience, education, and training completed by an applicant for certification as emergency medical services personnel; provides that the Commissioner may accept such experience, education, and training as satisfying the requirements for certification; and requires the Board of Health to establish criteria for determining when an applicant's experience, education and training satisfies the requirements for certification.

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